

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 remain pending in the current Application. No amendments have been made herein.

Rejection of claims 1-5 and 8-19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-5 and 8-19 are patentable over US Patent No. 5, 411, 358 (hereinafter referred to as Garric) in view of US Patent No. 6,259,961 (hereinafter referred to as Inoue).

Claims 1-7:

With respect to claim 1, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over Garric in view of Inoue. Claim 1 claims a plurality of mask containers, each mask container having an electronic device having a receiver unit for receiving lithography data, a memory for storing the lithography data, a processor unit for reading or writing the lithography data to or from the memory, and a transmitter unit for transmitting the lithography data read from the memory. The Examiner cites col. 28, lines 8-30, of Garric as teaching an electronic tracking device on each container. However, this section only discloses the use of a label or bar code tag. The Examiner agrees that the label or bar code tag of Garric does not include a receiver, memory, processor unit, and transmitter unit as claimed in claim 1, but instead cites Inoue as teaching these elements. The Examiner states that the delivery device 20 includes the claimed elements of the tracking device of claim 1. However, although the delivery device 20 of Inoue includes an interface 31, processing device 32, and a bar-code reader, there is no motivation in either Garric or Inoue to combine these elements of the delivery device 20 of Inoue into *each container of Garric*. Firstly, the containers 100 of Garric are transported to various processing equipments 500 via conveyor system 401. However, in Inoue, the delivery device 20 is not meant to be included as part of the cassettes which are carried to various treatment apparatuses 7 or 9 via automated guided vehicle 5. That is, it is located in one location which is accessible by vehicle 5 but is not transported by vehicle 5. Furthermore, each of the transportable cassettes in Inoue,

which are transported by vehicle 5 and can be stored in delivery device 20, also simply includes a bar code to identify the lot (see, e.g., col. 4, lines 59-61), similar to the containers of Garric. That is, only tracking device 20 includes the processing elements, where these processing elements are not provided for each cassette, but which may be used for the cassettes currently be stored in its buffers (e.g. buffers 22a-22h). As stated above, the system in Garric uses bar code labels on its cassettes used to transport wafers and the Inoue system also uses bar code labels on its cassettes used to transport wafers, thus neither system provides any motivation to include processing elements on its mask containers in addition to or in place of the bar code labels. Neither the system of Garric or Inoue contemplate a receiver, processor, memory, and transmitter *for each mask container*, as claimed in claim 1. One would not be motivated to place the processing elements of delivery device 20 of Inoue onto each transportable container 100 of Garric since the delivery device of Inoue and the containers of Garric serve very different purposes. Furthermore, the Examiner states that one would combine the teachings of Garric with the control system of Inoue because "it would provide an improved system wherein information of the wafers in a container or delivery device can easily be tracked between the delivery device and the control computer." However, Applicants respectfully disagree. As discussed above, each of the systems in Garric and Inoue already track the wafers being processed through the use of bar code labels read by bar-code readers. Including the processing elements of the tracking device in Inoue in each container of Garric would not provide for an improved system, but would instead undesirably increase both complexity and overhead.

With respect to claim 3, Applicants submit that claim 3 is allowable for at least those reasons provided above with respect to claim 1. However, claim 3 includes further elements which are not taught or suggested by Garric or Inoue, alone or in combination. For example, claim 3 further claims "wherein each container has electrical contacts positioned such that contacts on two neighboring containers in a stack form an electrical connection when the two containers are correctly positioned relative to each other." This is not taught or suggested by the cited references. The Examiner states that Garric discloses these elements and cites col. 42, lines 35-41 and FIG. 14B element 312. However, element 312 refers to retractable nozzles used to provide automatic control of the gas flow within the container and does not teach electrical contacts as claimed in claim 3. That is, it is irrelevant in Garric whether two nozzles 312 form an electrical connection between two neighboring stacked containers. Furthermore, it is

irrelevant to nozzles 312 whether the two neighboring stacked containers are correctly positioned relative to each other. Therefore, for these additional reasons, Applicants submit that claim 3 is allowable over Garric in view of Inoue.

Claims 2 and 4-7 have not been independently addressed since they depend directly or indirectly from allowable claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least those reasons provided with respect to claim 1.

Claims 10-14:

With respect to claim 10, Applicants submit that claim 10 is also allowable over Garric in view of Inoue because neither Garric, Inoue, nor their combination teach or suggest each and every element of claim 10. For example, claim 10 claims each mask container having an electronic tracking device having a receiver unit for receiving lithography data from a lithography bay, a memory, a processor unit, and a transmitter unit where the transmitter unit transmits lithography data read from the memory to the same lithography bay or another lithography bay. Claim 10 further claims a transport rail system for carrying the containers (which include the electronic tracking devices) between different lithography bays. Firstly, Garric in combination with Inoue does not teach or suggest each mask container having an electronic tracking device as claimed in claim 10 for at least those reasons provided above with respect to claim 1. As discussed above, neither Garric nor Inoue provide any motivation for replacing the bar code labels of Garric with the processing elements of delivery device 20 of Inoue. Furthermore, with respect to claim 10, neither the bar code labels on the containers 100 of Garric nor the processing elements of delivery device 20 communicate with a lithography bay. For example, in Garric, bar code readers are placed along the conveyer system to read the bar code labels but the containers do not communicate back and forth with the processing equipment 500. Also, in Inoue, the delivery device 20 communicates information directly to and from the control computer, but it does not transmit or receive information to or from treatment apparatuses 7 or 9. Therefore, neither Garric nor Inoue, alone or in combination, teaches or suggest a receiver and transmitter unit on each mask container which communicates with lithography bays. Furthermore, claim 10 claims a transport rail system for carrying the containers; however, the delivery device 20 of Inoue is not transported but remains in a fixed

location. Therefore, there is no motivation for including the more complex processing elements of fixed delivery device 20 in place of or in addition to the bar code labels of containers 100 in Garric. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 10 is allowable over Garric in view of Inoue.

Claims 11-14 have not been independently addressed because they depend directly or indirectly from allowable claim 10 and are therefore also allowable for at least those reasons provided with respect to claim 10.

Claims 15-17:

With respect to claim 15, Applicants submit that claim 15 is allowable over Garric in view of Inoue because neither Garric, Inoue, nor their combination teach or suggest each and every element of claim 15. For example, claim 15 claims a plurality of mask containers, each having an electronic tracking device having a receiver unit for receiving lithography data from a lithography bay, a memory, a processor unit, and a transmitter unit for transmitting the lithography data read from the memory to the same lithography bay or another lithography bay. Claim 15 also claims a transport rail system for carrying the containers between different lithography bays. Applicants submit that neither Garric, Inoue, nor their combination teach or suggest these elements. Many of the arguments provided above with respect to claim 10 apply here to claim 15 and therefore will not be repeated. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 15 is allowable over Garric in view of Inoue.

Claims 16-17 have not been independently addressed because they depend directly or indirectly from allowable claim 15 and are therefore also allowable for at least those reasons provided with respect to claim 15.

Claim 18:

With respect to 18, Applicants submit that claim 18 is allowable over Garric in view of Inoue. For example, claim 18 claims an assembly comprising a plurality of mask containers, wherein each mask container has an electronic tracking device having a receiver unit, a memory, a processor unit, and a transmitter unit. Many of the reasons provided above with respect to

claim 1 apply here to claim 18 and therefore will not be repeated. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 18 is allowable over Garric in view of Inoue.

Claim 19:

With respect to claim 19, Applicants submit that claim 19 is allowable over Garric in view of Inoue because neither Garric, Inoue, nor their combination teach or suggest each and every element of claim 19. For example, claim 19 claims receiving lithography data from a plurality of mask containers, selecting two or more containers on the basis of the received lithography data, operating a first automatic handling device so as to group together the selected containers in the form of a stack and to place the stack on a rail system, and operating the rail system so as to transport the stack. Firstly, neither Garric nor Inoue teach or suggest selecting two or more containers on the basis of the received lithography data. The Examiner cites col. 41, lines 35-37, of Garric and states that interface apparatus 200 of Garric may be adapted to operate with a pile of containers. However, simply because the interface apparatus 200 can be adapted to operate with a pile of containers does not teach or suggest the ability to actually select two or more containers on the basis of received lithography data prior to stacking them. Furthermore, neither teach or suggests grouping together selected containers in the form of a stack, or operating the rail system so as to transport this stack. The cited sections of Garric indicate that the interface apparatus 200 can be adapted to operate on a pile of containers; however, this also does not teach or suggest the ability to actually group containers in the form of a stack on the basis of received lithography data. That is, none of the cited references teach or suggest selecting containers for stacking based on received lithography data from mask containers, and stacking these selected containers, as claimed in claim 19. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 19 is allowable over Garric in view of Inoue.

Conclusion

Although Applicants may disagree with other statements made by the Examiner in reference to the claims and the cited references, Applicants are not discussing all these

statements in the current Office Action, yet reserve the right to address them at a later time if necessary.

Applicants respectfully requests allowance of the pending claims. Contact me if there are any issues regarding this communication or the current Application.

If Applicant has overlooked any additional fees, or if any overpayment has been made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to credit or debit Deposit Account 503079, Freescale Semiconductor, Inc.

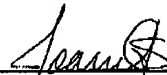
Respectfully submitted,

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